

# Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy



## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of the policy is to set out BSC requirements on the use of reasonable adjustments and special considerations in relation to BSC qualifications.

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It is important that personnel involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of BSC products, as well as learners are fully aware of the contents of this policy.

BSC is committed to achieving an environment that provides equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination of any kind. Our qualifications and assessments will be explicit about what is to be assessed and will allow for a variety of forms of evidence to be used, wherever possible, within fit-for-purpose assessments that are free from any unjustifiable barriers. Our qualification and assessment development systems ensure that no hidden or additional elements form part of the assessment.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that BSC has in place clear arrangements to make reasonable adjustments that ensure that any learner with a disability, as defined by the Act, is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with learner who is not disabled. Assessment must be a fair test of learner knowledge, skills and understanding, but for some learners the usual form of assessment may not be suitable. BSC must ensure that the qualifications and assessments that we develop do not unfairly prevent the learner from taking our qualifications. To ensure that access to fair assessment can be maintained, BSC puts provision in place for reasonable adjustments and special considerations so that learners can receive the recognition they deserve providing achievements are valid, reliable and can be assured.

## Applying for reasonable adjustments

BSC endeavours to ensure that the assessment requirements and methods used within its qualifications and assessments are sufficiently flexible to enable the widest range of learners fairly and reliably to demonstrate competence and meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the qualifications. However, we must also ensure that the arrangements we allow will be valid and reliable, designed to accurately reflect learner competence to meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the qualifications. We must also ensure that learners are not given either a real, or a perceived, unfair advantage. A reasonable adjustment may be needed to provide access to assessment where a learner has a permanent or temporary disability or difficulty and is approved, and/or agreed, before the assessment takes place.

A reasonable adjustment helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that puts learners at a disadvantage in terms of assessment. However, reasonable adjustments must not affect or compromise the integrity of what is being assessed. Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the assessment. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learners work.

BSC centre are only required to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access to assessment. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications, and the practicality and

effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

### **Making reasonable adjustments**

Some reasonable adjustments can be agreed by the centre and notified to BSC; others will need agreement from BSC.

Examples of reasonable adjustments may include those given below, although this list is not exhaustive:

- Changing usual assessment arrangements; for example, allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity
- Adapting assessment materials
- Providing assistance during assessment; such as a sign language interpreter or a reader
- Re-organising the assessment room; such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner
- Using assistive technology; such as screen reading, or voice activated software
- Providing the mechanism to have different colour backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments, or asking for permission for copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments
- Providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers

Reasonable adjustments must:

- Not give a learner an unfair advantage
- Not compromise or invalidate the assessment requirements of a qualification
- Be based on the individual need of a learner
- Reflect the learner's normal way of working

Any adjustment to assessment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy. All learner performance will be assessed against set standards and although they cannot be altered, it may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each learner has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what she knows and what can do.

Learners should be able to achieve the assessment requirements and any adjustments made should not compensate the learner for lack of knowledge and skills. The learner must be able to cope with the content of the assessment and be able to work at the level required for the assessment. The achievement of a learner who has had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner.

Any adjustment to assessment must be based on the individual need of a learner, the assessment requirements of a qualification and the nature and extent of the support given as part of normal teaching practice.

### **Reasonable Adjustments for Qualifications at Entry level and Level 1**

The centre should consider what adjustments learners with disabilities or difficulties may need and make appropriate provision in advance.

The centre should identify as early as possible, preferably before registering a learner for a qualification, any difficulties the learner may have in accessing assessment. To assist with this the centre should ensure that all staff who recruit, advise or guide potential learners have had training to make them aware of access-related issues. The centre should select an appropriate qualification for the learner, based upon the particular circumstances. The centre should explain to the learner the assessment requirements of the qualification and the planned programme of study. It should be made

clear at the outset if the learner will not be able to meet all the assessment criteria. The learner may still decide to proceed with the qualification but enter only for part, or none, of the assessment. In this case the centre should explain to the learner any restriction on progression to other qualifications as a result of not achieving all the criteria.

What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Centres should have policies and procedures in place to prevent discrimination against learners with access-related assessment needs.

Centres are permitted to implement the following reasonable adjustments without seeking the prior permission of the British Safety Council. Any adjustments required above and beyond this should be requested by the centre prior to the assessment taking place.

**Additional time** - Extra time of up to 25% of the assessment time may be granted to learners who have medical evidence to prove dyslexia or other medical conditions.

**Reader** - The assessment questions may be read to learners. This must be carried out in a separate room, or at a separate time, to the main assessment so as not to disturb other learners.

A signer may be used for hearing-impaired learners.

**Scribe** - A scribe may be used if the learner is unable to record their own answers. This may be in addition to the use of a reader, who could be the same person. The learner will require extra time for this and alternative accommodation and supervision must be provided.

**Bilingual dictionary** - May be used if the learner's first language is not English. If a bilingual dictionary is used, it must not contain explanations of terms. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted.

When a centre implements a reasonable adjustment, they must declare it at the time of the assessment.

### **Reasonable Adjustments for Qualifications at Level 2 and above**

Learners requiring a reasonable adjustment for their assessment must submit a Reasonable Adjustment Application Form to the British Safety Council at the earliest possible opportunity and (except in the case of a sudden disability or medical condition) at least three weeks before the date of the assessment. The application should include the nature of the learner's disability or learning need, special arrangements requested and supporting evidence (e.g. a doctor's letter). On receipt of a request for reasonable adjustments, the Head of Qualifications will decide whether or not to grant approval and, if appropriate, the provision required to meet the needs of the learner. Applications for reasonable adjustments may be dismissed by the Head of Qualifications if there is insufficient time to permit adequate arrangements to be made. If the request for reasonable adjustments is approved, the learner will be informed, in writing, of the arrangements that can be made. If the request for reasonable adjustments is not approved, the learner will be provided with a reasoned response.

The following are examples of the types of reasonable adjustments the British Safety Council can make, but it is not an exhaustive list. Reasonable adjustments are determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Additional time** - A learner may be allowed extra time if he/she has a condition which affects the speed of processing.

**Supervised rest breaks** - A learner may be allowed supervised rest breaks if there is a demonstrated need.

**Change in the organisation of the examination room** - Minor changes to the organisation of the examination room may benefit some learners with learning or physical difficulties.

Visually-impaired learners may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.

Hearing-impaired learners may benefit from sitting near the front of the room.

Separate accommodation within the centre - There may be a need to accommodate the learner separately if they are using a reader, scribe or equipment which may disturb other learners.

Modifications to the presentation of the assessment material - Where a learner's normal way of working relies on modifications, a learner can apply for modified assessment materials, e.g. enlarged examination question paper.

Alternative ways of presenting learner responses - Where there is evidence of need, a learner may present their responses by a method most appropriate and familiar to them, e.g. use of computer, verbal response.

Use of access facilitators - Where there is evidence of need, a reader may read to a learner all or part of the assessment material. Where there is evidence of need, a scribe may write down or word process a learner's dictated response.

Use of bilingual dictionaries - If a learner's first language is not English a learner may apply to use a bilingual dictionary.

### **Special Consideration**

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason why the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment. For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or another event outside of the learner's control.

Special consideration should not be granted solely on the grounds of disability, and learner must declare their needs prior to assessment, and any reasonable adjustments implemented before the assessment takes place.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage. The learner's result must reflect his or her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his or her potential ability. Special consideration, if successful, may lead to a small post-assessment adjustment to the learner's results, but not necessarily so. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Centres should note that:

- If there were an instance where a learner temporarily experiences an illness or injury, or other event outside of the learner's control in the type of assessments described, and it would be more appropriate to offer the opportunity to take that type of assessment later, the centre would need to contact BSC on the day of the scheduled assessment to ask for approval prior to rescheduling the assessments. All learners regardless of special consideration must meet the minimum requirements to achieve the award of a certificate. Examples of the circumstances where a learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration include those given below, although this list is not exhaustive:

- alternative assessment arrangements that were agreed in advance of assessment are not adequate
- performance is affected by circumstances beyond a learner's control, e.g. bereavement, recent personal illness, or accident or serious disturbance whilst the assessment takes place
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstance beyond a learner's control.

Learners who believe they were disadvantaged during an assessment through circumstances beyond their control may make a request for special consideration. Centres may apply for special consideration on behalf of learners. They should complete a Special Consideration Application Form and submit this to the British Safety Council no later than 7 days after the assessment. The application should be supported by appropriate evidence, for example, a doctor's letter in the case of illness.

Requests for special consideration will be considered at the awarding stage, and appropriate

allowance may be made at the judgement of the awarding committee. The maximum allowance is 5% of the total raw marks available for the particular component. No allowance will be made for circumstances which may have affected a learner's learning or preparation for an examination.

The British Safety Council cannot award learners who fail to undertake an assessment. As all assessment is external there would be insufficient evidence on which to make such an award.

Contact details for this policy

Qualifications Department  
British Safety Council  
70 Chancellors Road  
London W6 9RS

Telephone: 020 8741 1231  
E-mail: [qualifications@britsafe.org](mailto:qualifications@britsafe.org)  
Website: [www.britsafe.org](http://www.britsafe.org)

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